

What is claimed is:

1. A method for controlling a service at a center system, wherein via a network, the center system is connected to a host computer, a storage subsystem and a switch whose ports are physically connected to an I/O controller of the host computer and ports of the storage subsystem, the method comprising:

receiving a request for establishing a logical data I/O path between the host computer and the storage subsystem via the switch;

directing the switch and the storage subsystem to assign at least one port for the logical data I/O path;

making account information based upon at least the number of ports assigned at the switch.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the account information is made from the number of ports assigned at the storage subsystem.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
sending a message to the storage subsystem to request storage resources;
receiving from the storage subsystem a result, the result indicating whether storage resources have been successfully allocated in accordance with the message;
sending a message to a SAN switch to request an I/O path between a host computer requesting storage and the storage subsystem;
receiving from the SAN switch a result, the result indicating whether the I/O path has been successfully established in accordance with the message; and
updating account information based upon results received from the storage subsystem and the SAN switch.

4. A storage management service system, comprising:
a storage infrastructure on demand (SIOD) center system computer;
at least one storage subsystem;
a switch, operative to connect the at least one storage subsystem to one or

5 more host computers; wherein:

the storage subsystem, the SIOD center system computer, and the switch are
interconnected to share information;

the SIOD center system computer receives input of a request for establishing a
logical data I/O path between the at least one storage subsystem and one or more host
10 computers via the switch;

the SIOD center system computer forwards the request to the switch;

the switch establishes a connection between at least two ports, including a first
port and a second port, the first port being connectable to a host computer, and the second
port being connected to the at least one storage subsystem; and

15 at least one of the storage subsystem, the SIOD center system computer, and
the switch makes account information based on at least upon a number of ports assigned.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein

the account information comprises at least one of:

20 payment information to one or more vendors, the vendors providing at least
one of:

storage subsystem access, network access, and SAN switch access;

and

25 billing information to one or more customers.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein

the host computer and the storage subsystem are connected directly by
physical and logical connections made between at least one of a plurality of host I/O
controllers and at least one of a plurality of subsystem I/O ports via a SAN switch.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein
the physical and logical connections are made by zoning definitions between
ports in the SAN switch connectable to the at least one of a plurality of subsystem I/O ports
of the storage subsystems and the at least one of a plurality of host I/O controllers of the host
5 computers.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein the SAN switch comprises at least one
of a fibre channel network switch, an IP switch.

9. The system of claim 6, wherein
one or more host computers of one or more customers are connected to one or
10 more storage subsystems of one or more vendors via the SAN switch of a first vendor that
makes at least one connection between at least one host I/O controller of the one or more host
computers and at least one subsystem I/O ports of the one or more storage subsystems.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein
15 the SIO center system of a second vendor tracks port connection information
for preparing billing and/or payment information for customers and/or vendors.

11. An apparatus comprising:
means for receiving a request for storage;
means for establishing at least one logical connection between a user of
20 storage and a provider of storage responsive to the request;
means for determining a number of resources allocated to establish the logical
connection; and
means for tracking account information for at least one of the user of storage
and the provider of storage.

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12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein
the storage comprises at least one of magnetic disk, an optical disk, a
magnetic-optical disk, and a semiconductor memory.

5 13. The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:
means for communicating instructions to the providers of storage; interface to
a network;
means for communicating instructions to providers of connection services
between storage and user; and
10 means for communicating account information to the users and/or the
providers.

14. The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:
means for communicating instructions to a SAN switch, the SAN switch
15 providing capability to connect host computers to storage subsystems.

15. A method comprising:
receiving a request for establishing a logical data I/O path between a requestor
of storage and a provider of storage;
20 directing a request for a connection between the requestor of storage and the
provider of storage to a provider of switching connections; and
making account information based upon at least a number of ports assigned in
making the connection.

25 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
directing a request for storage resources between to a provider of storage
resources.

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